

J. C. Penney Department Store (Buffalo Building, Portland Building) HABS No. WA-169
5403-5407½ Ballard Avenue
Seattle
King County
Washington

HABS
WASH
17- SEAT
5-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Western Region
Department of the Interior
San Francisco, California 94102

HABS
WASH
17-SEAT,
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

J.C. PENNEY DEPARTMENT STORE (BUFFALO BUILDING) HABS No. WA-169

Location: 5403-5407½ Ballard Avenue N.W.
Seattle, WA 98117

Present Owner: Ballard Building Partnership dba 5401 Ballard Partnership

Present Occupant: Vacant

Present Use: Hotel and retail

Significance: Category I building in the Ballard Avenue Landmark District, a well preserved commercial section of an historic neighborhood community.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1901
2. Architect: Unknown
3. Original and subsequent owners: Unknown
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: Unknown
5. Original plans and construction: Brick bearing masonry with wood infill. Original plans not available.
6. Alterations and additions: In 1958, the alley behind the structure was improved. The rear wall of the building was removed to move back fourteen inches. It was replaced with a concrete block wall.

B. Historical Context:

The J.C. Penney Department Store is a typical brick building in a linear district of modest scale commercial buildings lining Ballard's historic main street. It contained one of the numerous hotels built along Ballard Avenue between the turn of the century and the First World War. Its irregular shape too is characteristic of buildings on block corners in the area which resulted from peculiarities of the plat.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: Two story brick bearing masonry with wood infill.

2. Condition of fabric: There has been significant deterioration of the brick and loss of all but two of the numerous chimneys.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: 100 ft. along the southwest line, 93 ft. along the north line, 66 ft. along the northeast line, 49 ft. along the east line, and 58 ft. along the southeast line. First floor ceiling height is 14 ft.; second floor ceiling height is 12 ft..
2. Foundations: Unreinforced concrete supported on on bearing native soils.
3. Walls: Exterior walls are masonry, except for the rear wall which is concrete block. Interior walls are wood frame.
4. Structural system, framing: Bearing masonry exterior walls with wood frame interior.
5. Chimneys: Originally there were seven common brick chimneys; two remain.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: All wood frame. The doorways leading to the commercial spaces and the hotel entrance are recessed.
 - b. Windows: The windows on all elevations except the rear elevation are double-hung wood frame. The storefronts were "remodeled" in the '50's and have aluminum frames; hopper windows immediately above the storefront are covered with plywood. Windows on the rear elevation are a combination of steel and aluminum frames.
7. Roof:
 - a. Shape, covering: Flat, composite roof not visible from the exterior and sloped to drain.
 - b. Cornice, eaves: Corbeled brick cornice.
 - c. Dormers, cupolas, towers: None.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor Plans:

- a. First floor: Two commercial spaces as shown in the attached plan of the existing building.
- b. Second floor: Forty-two (42) hotel rooms served by an extensive corridor system, as shown on the attached plan.

2. Stairways: Two woodframe stairways with fir wainscoting.

3. Flooring: Plain fir.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: Lath and plaster.

5. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: Wood frame.
- b. Windows: One over one double hung woodframe, except on the rear elevation which has a combination of steel and aluminum frames.

6. Decorative features and trim: Plain stock millwork.

7. Hardware: Plated or painted.

8. Mechanical Equipment:

- a. Heating: Gas space heaters, not original.
- b. Lighting: Added knob and tube.
- c. Plumbing: Standard where existing.

D. Site:

- 1. General setting and orientation: The building is located in a linear historic district. Its irregular shape is formed by the streets which intersect at approximately a 135° angle. The other two corners of the intersection contain primary historic buildings. The fourth corner was the site of the Ballard City Hall, demolished in the 1950's and replaced by a small park.
- 2. Historic Landscape design: There is no historic landscape or outbuildings.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Original Architectural Drawings: None available.
- B. Early views: The earliest view available is a photograph from the State Archives, taken circa 1930.
- C. Interviews: John Chaney, Program Coordinator, City of Seattle, Office of Urban Conservation.
- D. Bibliography:
 - 1. Primary and unpublished sources: National Register of Historic Places Inventory--Nomination Form for the Ballard Avenue Historic District.
 - 2. Secondary and published sources: See Attachment C.
- E. Likely Sources Not Yet Investigated: None identified.

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5401 Ballard Partnership
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PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The proposed rehabilitation of the J.C. Penney Building will entail the restoration of the exterior to its original condition to the maximum extent possible. The storefronts will be restored; the hopper windows uncovered; the brickwork cleaned and tuckpointed.

The interior will be largely rebuilt, replacing part of the existing commercial space and all of the hotel rooms with twenty-three low and moderate income apartments. All electrical, plumbing, and mechanical systems will be replaced with new systems which meet current standards. The roof will be rebuilt; the parapet repaired. Commercial spaces will be maintained on the first floor with reduced areas.

Attachment C.

J. C. PENNEY DEPARTMENT STORE

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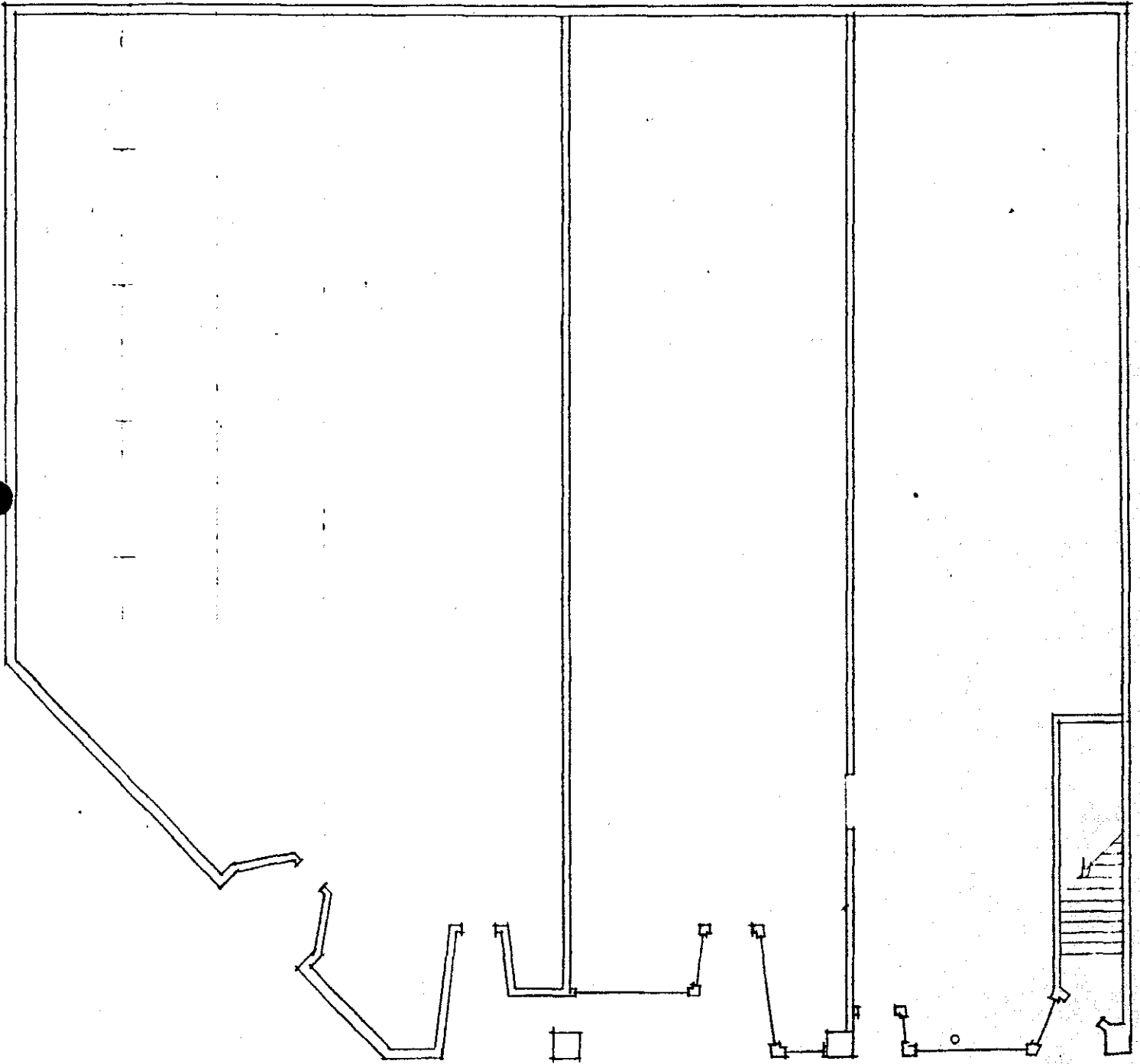
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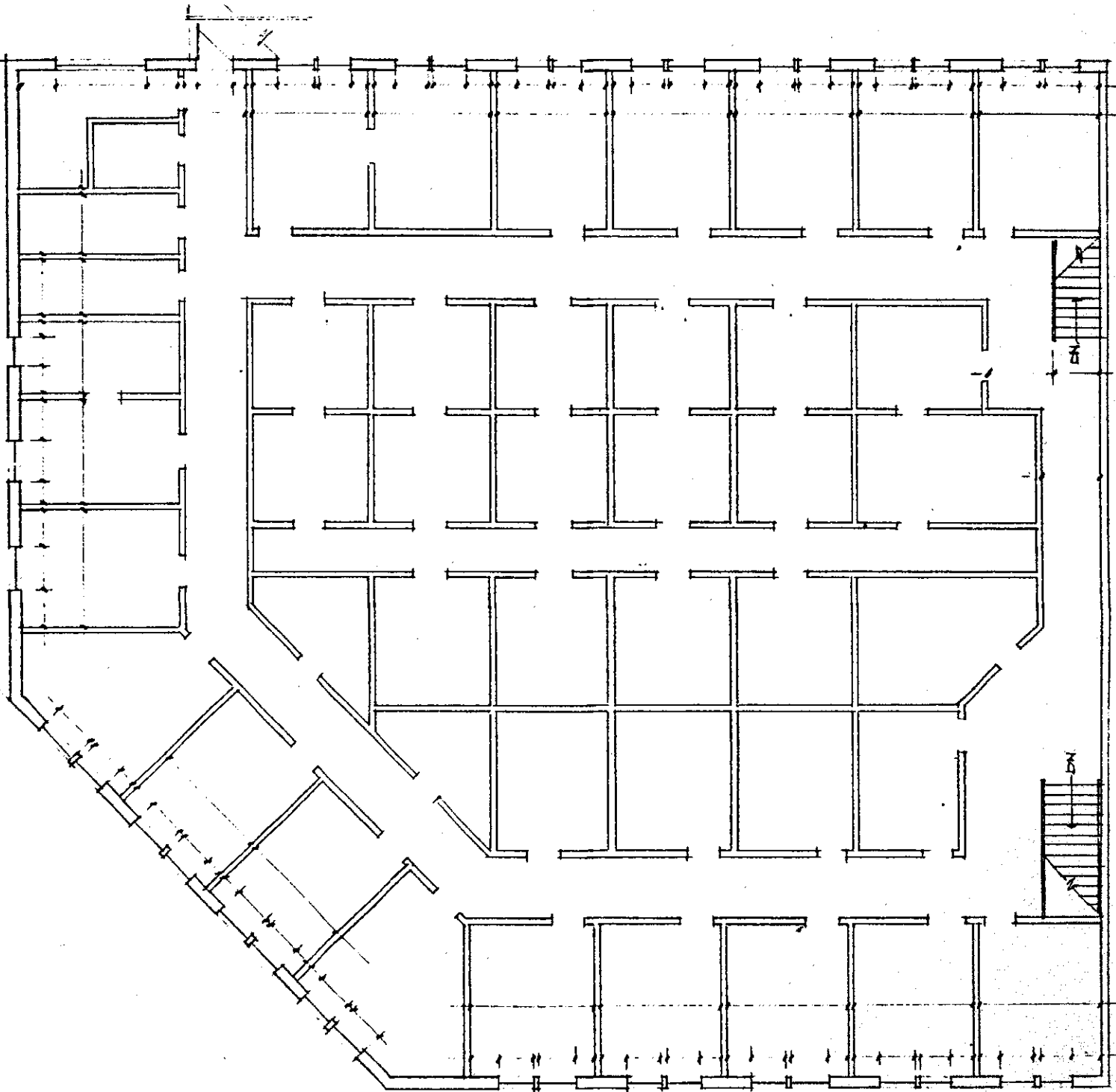
Attachment A.



EXISTING FIRST FLOOR PLAN
1/8" = 1'-0"



Attachment B.



EXISTING SECOND FLOOR PLAN
1/8" = 1'-0"

